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## **4 - Apocryphal Works: Old and New**

<https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Alien4.mp3>

The previous post mentioned certain sources that describe the activities of the "*mighty men of old*", indulging in some very unusual practices. Since there is no mention of these activities (e.g. manipulating seed, creating human-animal "chimeras") in the Bible, then it behooves us to investigate carefully these extra-Biblical sources.

Are they useful because they "fill in the details" not mentioned in the Bible, or are they merely the product of someone's imagination? Many of the ancient myths and legends are like this - fantastic tales that originated with some actual historical event but grew contorted with time. Could these books be similar, having some basis in truth, but containing much that is embellished and exaggerated - influenced perhaps by the vibrant, imaginative Greek culture of that era?

In evaluating their authenticity, the first thing that must be understood is that the *Book of Enoch*, the *Book of Jubilees*, and the *Book of Jasher* were written long after most of the events detailed in them happened. In addition, the *Book of Enoch* was not written by Enoch; this is fairly obvious because of certain errors in the text.

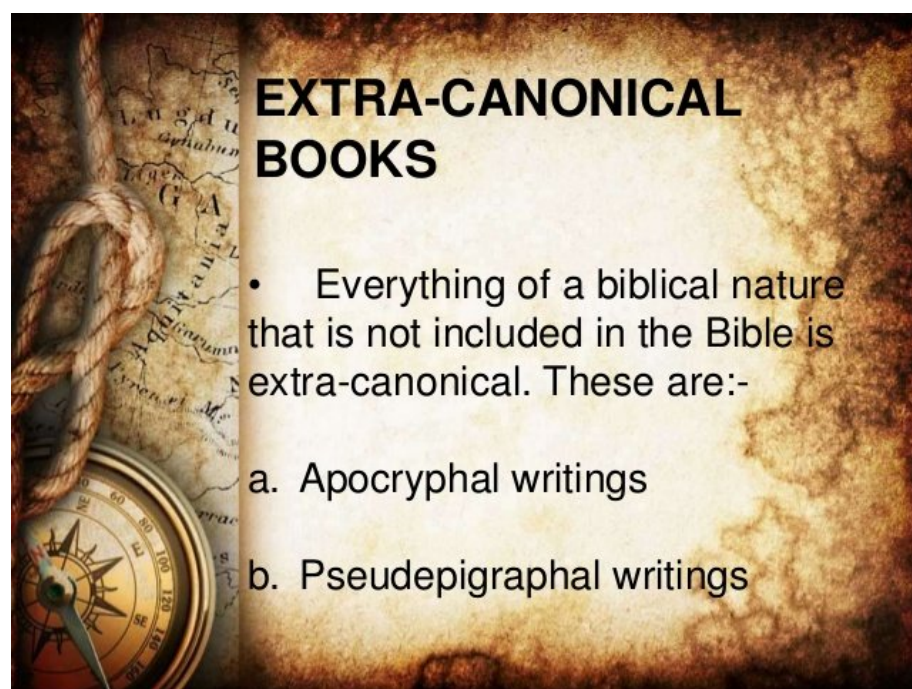
Modern movie productions face a similar dilemma. For example, a

movie might be set in Medieval times, and, if the producers are not careful, they might forget to hide certain details, such as the film catching in the background some power lines or actors sporting a modern day hairstyle. Such lapses, small as they are, would contradict the movie's historical setting. Even the best of movies is not going to get every detail exactly right. And the *Book of Enoch* is no different; it shows the same kind of weaknesses. (See [Appendix 2](#) for details.) Some of the Book does express genuine truth, but a good part of it was the author's imagination.

The same can be said for the *Book of Jasher*. The presently existing books of Jasher have, except for their title, no connection to the lost *Book of Jasher*, mentioned in the Old Testament by Joshua and David. (Joshua 10:13, 2Samuel 1:18) It is still a lost Book. (See [Appendix 3](#) for details.)

As for the *Book of Jubilees*, it is nothing more than a re-telling of the *Book of Genesis*; again much of it is imagination and embellishment of historical facts.

These Books were categorized as apocryphal\* or pseud-epigraphical\*\* works by early church scholars. They did not consider them to be genuine sources of truth and did not include them in the Canon of Scripture. And not without reason.



\* **Apocrypha** (dictionary): hidden or secret things: applied specially to certain books or parts of books included in the Septuagint and Vulgate translations of the Old Testament but not accepted as canonical by Jews or Protestants, and to later books (Apocrypha of the New Testament) never accepted as canonical or authoritative by any considerable part of the Christian Church. . . *adj. apocryphal*, of the Apocrypha: of doubtful authenticity, although widely circulated as being true: spurious: fabulous. (*Wikipedia: Apocrypha* are statements or claims that are of dubious authenticity.)

\*\* **Pseudepigrapha** (dictionary), books ascribed to Old Testament characters, but not judged genuine by scholars... *pseudepigraphy*, the ascription to books of false titles/names of authors. (*Wikipedia: "In biblical studies, pseudepigrapha refers particularly to works which purport to be written by noted authorities in either the Old and New Testaments or by persons involved in Jewish or Christian religious study or history. These works can also be written about biblical matters, often in such a way that they appear to be as authoritative as works which have been included in the many versions of the Judeo-Christian scriptures."*)

But then, we might ask, since Jude, the writer of one of the epistles in the New Testament, quotes from Enoch, does this not confer legitimacy on the *Book of Enoch*? To some extent, yes. The Book does speak about the "Son of Man" and is reputable on certain points, which is probably why Jude chose to quote from it in his epistle:

*Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all..." (Jude 14-15)*

Perhaps we can compare this to Paul's quotations in Acts 17:28.

*In Him we live and move and have our being* (from a hymn to Zeus by Epimenides of Crete 600 B.C.)

*For we are also His offspring.* (from the poem "Phainomena" by the Stoic poet Aratus of Cilicia 315-240 B.C.)

Paul used these quotations from the popular literature of his time to drive home the Gospel message to his audience of learned Greeks. The quotes themselves were truthful, but that doesn't mean that Paul was endorsing everything that these men had written, much of which was rooted in the pagan culture of ancient Greece.

The apocryphal works we are discussing belonged, of course, to a different literary genre. They were the hundreds, maybe even thousands, of spin-offs from Biblical themes, written mostly between 300 BC and AD 300. Almost every character in the Bible has some apocryphal "book" attributed to him or her. Many of these works were partly inspired, but all were questionable in some way or another. But it seems this sort of writing was common in the popular literature of those days.

And, like Paul with his Greeks, so Jude, with his Jews, was using a quote from their popular literature. These books were not frowned upon then, and hopefully, readers took them with a grain of salt and enjoyed them as entertainment, as embellishments of the original, bare-bones accounts given in the Scriptures. However, because of their authoritative tone and titles, many readers may have thought these writings were original sources.

Possibly, certain of these writings and their writers were the reason for the apostle Paul's exhortation to his young pastors regarding the misleading doctrines of some teachers within the Early Church:

***Charge certain persons not... to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations... Certain persons... have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. (1Timothy 1:3-7, ESV)***

Could that phrase "*confident assertions*" apply nowadays to how "alien gospel" doctrines (or perhaps some conspiracy theories) are expounded sometimes - with so much swagger and certainty?

On this question of "genre", a helpful passage commenting on the *Book of Revelation* and comparing it with the "genres" of apocalyptic literature

that were popular in those ancient times may be found in [Appendix 4](#). As that commentary points out, the apocryphal works were inferior to the inspired *Book of Revelation*. They tended to convey a harsh, judgmental tone; to view history from a black-and-white perspective; and to indulge in holier-than-thou exclusivism of believers from non-believers.

As mentioned, the scholars of old did not regard the *Book of Enoch*, which is mentioned in the *Book of Jude*, as authoritative and so did not include it in the Canon of Scriptures. Modern day scholarship understands it in much the same way. The following quotes are commentaries on the passage in Jude about the *Book of Enoch*:

**[ESV Study Bible, pg 2451:] 14-16 Judgment on the False Teachers Revisited.** Jude turns his primary focus back to judgment, using an extrabiblical Jewish work, *1 Enoch* (2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.), to make his point. The use of extrabiblical literature does not mean that any of these literary works are authoritative words of God in the same category as Scripture (see note on vv. 8-10). Jude is simply drawing from *1 Enoch* another example of judgment, which means that, in at least this specific instance, *1 Enoch* 1.9 contains truth.

**[The MacArthur Study Bible, pg 1984:]** Jude does quote from non-canonical, pseudepigraphical (i.e., the actual author was not the one named in its title) sources such as *1 Enoch* (v. 14) and the *Assumption of Moses* (v. 9) to support his points. Was this acceptable? Since Jude was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20,21) and included material that was accurate and true in its affirmations, he did no differently than Paul (cf. Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12).

One sometimes hears the idea expressed that there has been some kind of conspiracy to suppress the *Book of Enoch*, and therefore, we should unearth it as a new source of Biblical truth. But actually, the *Book of Enoch* just died out by itself. Since it was not totally reliable as a source of truth, it lost its currency and, unlike the genuine, original accounts in the Canon of Scripture, it faded away into obscurity.

Perhaps we could compare these writings, such as the *Book of Enoch* or the *Book of Jasher*, to modern day works of historical fiction, which have

value in entertaining and giving a feel for what life was like in the days of old; but of course, such books are not to be taken as valid historical documents.

For example, there is, as far as we know, a real King Arthur, who is supposed to have lived around the late 5<sup>th</sup> or early 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. But all the legends and stories about this former English king are quite fanciful and not to be relied on for serious historical investigation - although they do make for good entertainment, of course.

Regarding future history, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is an example we could consider. J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy series could be understood as an attempt to re-cast the *Book of Revelation* in a form that would appeal to the skeptical world of modern times. Although *The Lord of the Rings* contains many spiritual truths that we can learn from, still no one would seriously consider the battle for "Middle Earth" to be an accurate interpretation of the Book of Revelation's outline of future history and the future great Battle to remove corruption and restore Earth to its original purity. The value of Tolkien's book lies in its masterful ability to create a feel for the supernatural reality that the Revelation Book tries to portray in its few brief pages.

But one important difference: *The Lord of the Rings* does not pretend to be genuine. The reader knows it is a work of fantasy. On the other hand, the *Book of Enoch* and other apocryphal works tried to pass themselves off as original productions. So there is a difference between the novels of fantasy that are meant as entertainment and those works that are "doctrinal" in nature and claim to have insight into past or future history beyond what is written in the Bible.

The former is relatively harmless and can even be helpful and faith-building and prepare believers for the future; the latter - like the apocryphal books of old - come across as if they are authoritative and authentic; and so have potential to confuse, mislead, and even discredit believers.

Another comparison to the Apocrypha (from the world of cinema): Movies of historical fiction, or even biographical movies, often take great liberty with the facts. Although they may not be accurate historically, they

can make for an exciting movie, and edifying too, if good principles are woven into it. A movie may base itself on some historical incident and weave a big story around it that may or may not have happened - for entertainment's sake; otherwise, if the movie stuck too rigidly to the meager historical account, it would be very short and not too exciting.

If such movies are well made and embedded with edifying principles, illustrating historical realities and even drawing their audiences towards faith in God and godly values, then they can have beneficial value. But as far as being valid historical documents, they should not be taken too seriously. The apocryphal works that were written, in the years before and after Christ's coming, could be seen in the same light - as the "movies" of the ancient world.

It could well be that, during those inter-Testament years, Jewish writers became more prolific in their output due to a combination of factors: the sophisticated Greek culture of that era exerted a strong pull on the minds of Jewish people, which may have led Jewish writers to think they should "spice up" the Bible tales to make them more appealing to the imaginative Greek mind; the Greek emphasis on education and the arts also encouraged the growth of literature in those days; scholarly Jews had gathered in Alexandria, Egypt, a major center of learning in the ancient world, and there the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek - the Septuagint Bible; furthermore, because of subjugation under Greek and Roman rulers, there existed in Jewish culture a yearning - a market we might say - for embellished tales related to the glories of past history. So it seems, considering these different factors, that conditions were ripe for the rise of a large body of speculative literature at that time in Jewish history.

Looking into modern times, we can see how history has repeated itself: the advent of printing and greater literacy has caused an explosion in the number of books written. And amongst all our vast body of literature, there are various "genres" that have become popular.

One example is science-fiction writing. For this particular genre to get started, a "take-off" point was needed, and that was the scientific world's discovery of the vastness of outer space and the universe. The stars and planets were no more just pinpoints of light, but globes as big as the Sun



and planet Earth. This then threw the door wide open for writers and their imaginations to come up with an endless number of sci-fi stories.

Another “take-off” point was Darwin’s theory of evolution. Darwin was correct in promoting “micro-evolution”: natural selection and the understanding that variations take place within the genetic boundaries of a species. But the part where he was wrong - thinking that a species could evolve beyond its genetic boundaries (“macro-evolution”) - this was the aspect that learned people latched onto. At last, the academic world had a theory of origins that didn’t require faith in a Creator. “Macro-evolution”, which started as a theory, so entranced the academic world that it soon began proclaiming the theory as if it were established fact. The theory took on a life of its own to the point now that most people think it is some kind of eternal truth.

As often happens, a theory or world-view that leaves God out of the picture gains its traction by having in it something that is true and advanced for that time in history. And so it was that Darwin’s ideas unleashed a torrent of pseudo-scientific literature, and rather silly theories, in the academic world and in popular media publications... and still does unfortunately.

Evolution theory bears similarity, by the way, to “ancient alien” speculations, which also deny God’s role in Creation and assign that to the work of aliens from distant stars. This whole subject was popularized recently in a History Channel television series called *Ancient Aliens*. To get a more balanced and accurate view of what was presented in that series, the following YouTube presentation, called [Ancient Aliens De-Bunked](#), is recommended.

It is needful to avoid that subtle tendency in the world of thought and literature, which the Enemy certainly likes to promote, of belittling God’s role in Creation (and by extension, belittling the role He should have in our personal lives and human history).

Continuing with our exploration of popular artistic “genres”, here is a familiar one from the 1950s and 60s. In the early days of black-and-white TV, America’s frontier era became the subject of popular productions glorifying the exploits of Wild West heroes. Although some of these



characters did exist historically, the endless series of adventures portrayed on the TV screen were far removed from reality.

And different cultures around the world also have their romanticized tales of their past eras and past heroes that are widely promoted in their own films and books. This is a common feature in the artistic world of movies, books, etc. - to attract audiences (and revenue) by spinning fanciful tales around the events and characters of a society's frontier/ancient heritage... similar to what happened in much of Jewish apocryphal literature.

Another "genre", which has been around a long time, got a boost in more recent times with Carroll Quigley's *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time*. This extraordinary book, published in 1966, exposed how much the plots and conspiracies of unscrupulous power-brokers operating behind the scenes have affected the course of human history. This was also the era of anti-establishment counter culture beatniks and hippies. So here was another "take-off" point that spawned an endless array of conspiracy theories in recent times - some quite good, some exaggerated, and some downright silly.

Likewise, in that ancient time, the apocryphal/pseud-epigraphical works had their "take-off" points that prompted the rise of that genre of popular literature: Greek culture and learning, Jewish literary communities, their Old Testament heritage and oral traditions, the Gospel writings, the First Coming of Christ.

And history repeats itself. *"There is nothing new under the sun."* (Ecclesiastes 1:9) Today we have a new "take-off" point or points: the fulfillment in our modern world of several Biblical predictions or "signs" that herald the return of Christ; many in the world sense that the End is near. That sense of impending doom, and the Scriptures that have not yet been fulfilled, beg for some explanation - such as those about earth's environment getting besieged by the forces of Darkness, which is popular in "alien gospel" theories.

So, like the sci-fi genre, or like the ancient apocryphal genre of literature, we are seeing the rise of a new genre - the rather bewildering array of theories and speculations about Earth's future "end of the world"

scenario. “Alien gospel” is like a sub-genre, whose “take-off” points are the Scriptures in Genesis 6 about the *“men of renown”* (and apocryphal works that claim to elaborate on them) and other (misunderstood) Scriptures from the Old and New Testament.

What the “End of the Age” will bring is a subject that attracts great interest in these modern times, and no doubt, there will be many who will want to cash in on it for personal gain - for profit, self-exaltation, or both. *“Teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.”* (Titus 1:11 ESV) *“By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words.”* (2Peter 2:3)

This dilemma existed in the days of the Early Church with the deluge of spin-offs and people *“desiring to be teachers of the law”*, latching on to certain theories regarding Christ’s divinity and other matters. (1Timothy 1:7) This torrent of divergent teaching was generating confusion rather than clarity in those days. And Paul had to exhort his young pastors, Timothy and Titus, to put a damper on it. This era saw the birth of several heresies that had to be refuted to prevent the corruption of the Gospel.

But then in later church history, the pendulum did swing in the other direction. When reformers began to challenge the established order, the Church falsely condemned their innovative ideas and new methods as heresy. But in Early Church history the pendulum had swung dangerously into the realm of real heresies that were threatening to undermine the foundation truths of faith in Christ.

(NEXT) **5 - Reverse-Engineering/Embellishment of Artistic Works**